

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 22, 2008

Rabbi Aaron Rubashkin
President and Director
Agriprocessors, Inc.
PO Box 920
Postville, IA 52162

Dear Rabbi Rubashkin:

We write to express our deep concern as Jewish Members of Congress regarding recent reports concerning Agriprocessors' business and labor practices. The allegations about the company's treatment of its workers and the animals raise serious questions about the company's compliance with U.S. law and the highest standards of Jewish law and tradition concerning kashrut--a subject certainly beyond the scope of the U.S. government's concern, but one of considerable importance to the Jewish communities in our districts.

We were shocked by the May 12, 2008 raid on your facility by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which led to the arrest of nearly 400 of your employees, each of whom was working and living in the United States as an illegal immigrant. We were absolutely stunned, however, to learn that, in the course of their investigations, federal authorities reportedly uncovered a methamphetamine laboratory and a Social Security card-forgery ring, as well as the use of child labor, inside the Agriprocessors facility. While federal investigators are still in the process of determining the extent that company management was aware of these activities, the decision by the Iowa Attorney General to file some 9,000 separate child labor charges is deeply troubling.

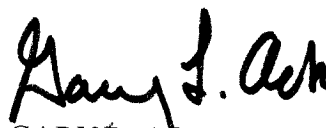
The company has also opposed efforts by employees to unionize, disregarding orders by the National Labor Relations Board and the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington to honor a vote by workers at Agriprocessors' distribution center in Brooklyn, New York to join the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. Most recently, Agriprocessors has challenged these orders on the basis that some of the employees who supported the union effort were undocumented, despite the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Sure-Tan Inc. v. the National Labor Relations Board* that the National Labor Relations Act pertains to employees regardless of their immigration status. If the allegations about Agriprocessors' knowledge of the hiring of undocumented workers are true, the company would appear to have a brazen interest in abiding by U.S. laws at its own convenience.


In addition to our alarm over reports of your company's extensive, deplorable and illegal treatment of many of its workers, we have been disgusted by revelations about Agriprocessors' slaughtering practices and the company's treatment of animals. Between January 1, 2006 and January 24, 2007, Agriprocessors was issued five separate citations by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for faulty monitoring of mad cow disease and more than a dozen citations for fecal and bile contamination of beef and poultry, which resulted in two separate meat recalls. A 2005 report by the USDA Inspector General also found evidence of inhumane slaughter practices.

After an undercover investigation by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in 2004 showed footage of cattle walking inside the Agriprocessors facility with slit throats – a grotesque and unethical practice altogether - the company asked Dr. Temple Grandin, a well-respected expert in the fields of animal rights and humane slaughtering practices, to tour the facility and recommend reforms. More recently, another undercover PETA investigation filmed the use of a practice known as “gouging,” which inflicts deep, agonizing, saw-like wounds onto an animal immediately after the rabbi completed the ritual cut as proscribed by Jewish law. The new report led Dr. Grandin to rescind her earlier support of the slaughtering practices employed by the company and recommend the permanent installment of cameras that would be independently monitored.

If these many and varied allegations prove to be true, aside from personal criminal liability, such conduct would be a blot on the reputation of the kosher food industry. While we welcome the announcement last week that Agriprocessors has hired a new chief executive officer, Bernard Feldman, under the threat of losing kosher certification from the Orthodox Union, we remain deeply disturbed by the company’s alleged past practices. We would appreciate a detailed explanation of the steps Agriprocessors will be taking under the leadership of Mr. Feldman to address the company’s systemic problems and ensure the humane and ethical treatment of both workers and animals in accordance with both U.S. laws and Jewish standards.

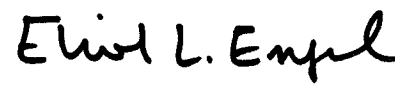
Sincerely,


GARY L. ACKERMAN
Member of Congress



HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress



HOWARD L. BERMAN
Member of Congress

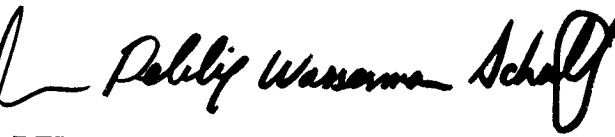

STEVE ISRAEL
Member of Congress


ELIOT L. ENGEL
Member of Congress

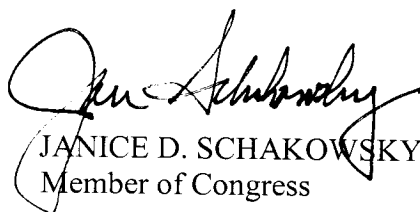

RON KLEIN
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